

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5057

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 1826

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TAGS: BEXP BGEN, SN

SUBJECT: VISUAL SEARCH MICROFILM FILES

REF: A. STATE 022920 B. SINGAPORE A-112 OF JULY 23, 1975

C. SINGAPORE A-182 OF JANUARY 7, 1976

1. SUMMARY POST'S VISUAL SEARCH MICROFILM FILES SYSTEMS (VSMF) WAS INSTALLED OCTOBER 28, 1975. INITIAL RESPONSE WAS EXCELLENT DUE PRIMARILY TO PROMOTION IN COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER ON NOVEMBER 24, 1975. SYSTEM CURRENTLY HAS RATHER LOW BUT STEADY USAGE WITH GROWING NUMBER OF REPEATERS. EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL SERVICES UNIT (CSU) IS EXCELLENT SITE FOR SYSTEM. SEE REPAIRS B AND C FOR DESCRIPTION OF SITE, AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO BUSINESSMEN. INITIAL REPORT ON VSMF USAGE IS CONTAINED IN REPAIR C. POST STRONGLY RECOMMENDS RETENTION OF VSMF HERE AND PROJECTS INCREASING USAGE AS CSU BUILDS UP LARGER CLIENTELE. USRTC ALSO VERY INTERESTED IN USING SYSTEM IN UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND BSP'S. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ARE POST'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED REFTTEL A FOR USE IN EVALUATING VSMF USAGE IN SINGAPORE:

A. NUMBER AND TYPE OF USERS: DURING PERIOD JANUARY 1- MARCH 31, 1976, USERS TOTALLED 76 (WHICH IS AVERAGE OF SLIGHTLY OVER ONE PER WORK DAY). PRINCIPALS USERS INCLUDED ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS, (MOSTLY CONSTRUCTION AND A FEW MARINE ENGINEERS), SMALL TRADING COMPANIES, LOCAL AGENTS AND DISTRIBUTORS SEEKING PROSPECTS FOR NEW IMPORT LINES. IN CONJUNCTION WITH A USRTC MAJOR EXHIBITION OF HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT, JANUARY 13-16, SMALL UNCLASSIFIED

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NUMBER OF MEDICAL AND HOSPITAL SUPPLIERS AND A FEW DOCTORS USED

THE SYSTEM TO SURVEY RANGE OF PRODUCTS TO BE EXHIBITED AND ALSO SCAN COMPETITORS' EQUIPMENT.

B. USE OF VSMF FILES:

DOCUMENTATION 40 PERCENT
BUILDING PRODUCTS 30 PERCENT
DESIGN ENGINEERING 15 PERCENT
PLANT ENGINEERING 15 PERCENT

POST WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THESE FOUR FILES WERE RECEIVED VIA DIRECT TRANSFER FROM USTC FRANKFURT AND DESIGN ENGINEERING AND PLANT ENGINEERING FILES HAVE PRODUCE LITTLE INTEREST HERE. DOCUMENTATION AND BUILDING PRODUCTS SERVICES ARE MORE BROADLY BASED AND GENERALLY ABLE TO BETTER SERVE THE GREAT VARIETY OF LOCAL CUSTOMERS NEEDS. SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO REPLACING FORMER TWO ENGINEERING SERVICES WITH SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING:- (IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE)
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
DISTRIBUTION CATALOG SERVICE
TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIALS HANDLING SERVICE
MARINE ENGINEERING

C. FREQUENTLY LOCATED PRODUCT CATEGORIES: USE OF VSMF IS GENERALLY ON INDEPENDENT BASIS (SEE D BELOW) AND THEREFORE CSU DOES NOT TAKE NOTE OF SPECIFIC PRODUCT CATEGORIES LOCATED. HOWEVER, CSUS STAFF HAS RECENTLY BEGUN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY TYPES OF PRODUCTS REQUESTED BY USERS AND WILL BE ABLE TO INCLUDE THIS DATA IN SUBSEQUENT REPORTING.

D. LOCATION OF VSMF: SYSTEM IS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED ON IMMEDIATE RIGHT OF ENTRANCE TO CSU. SEE PHOTOS ATTACHED TO REF AIR C. VSMF IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CSU VISITORS WITHOUT GUIDANCE OF STAFF. HOWEVER, AS OPERATION APPEARS SOMEWHAT FORMIDABLE, VISITORS GENERALLY REQUEST ASSISTANCE OF REFERENCE LIBRARIAN WHO WILL DEMONSTRATE TECHNIQUE AND START USER ON INSTRUCTION TAPE. REFERENCE LIBRARIAN (ONLY ONE IN CSU) USUALLY HAS LITTLE TIME FOR FOLLOWUP AND USER IS ON HIS OWN AFTER INITIAL BRIEFING.

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E. PUBLICITY: ONE ISSUE OF EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER (NOVEMBER 24, 1975) WAS DEVOTED TO PUBLICIZING VSMF. THIS GENERATED OVER 50 INQUIRIES AND APPROXIMATELY 30 USAGES. MANY FAVORABLE COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED. CSU STAFF NORMALLY DIRECTS THE ATTENTION OF APPROPRIATE VISITORS TO THE SYSTEM. FORTHCOMING COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER, TO BE PUBLISHED IN MAY IN EXPANDED FORMAT, HAS FEATURE ARTICLE WITH PHOTOS ON VSMF.

F. TRADE PROMOTION: SYSTEM SERVES AS USEFUL ADJUNCT TO AND CHECK ON COMMERCIAL DIRECTORIES AND OTHER PRINTED REFERENCE SOURCES. VSMF'S IMPRESSIVE AND COMMANDING PRESENCE ATTRACTS ATTENTION OF VISITORS. IT IS VALUABLE ADDITIONAL ATTRACTION, ALONG WITH VIDEO TAPE CASSETTE VIEWING (ALSO IN DAILY USE) WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO OVERALL IMPRESSION OF CSU AS MODERN, UP-TO-DATE FACILITY.

G. SPECIAL USES: VSMF WAS LOANED TO USRTC FOR BSP BY JOHNSON CONTROL, INC. ON NOVEMEBR 17 AND 18, 1975. DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD THE SYSTEM WAS USED BY SUSRTC AT A MAJOR EXHIBITION OF BUSINESS EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS- FEBRUARY 24-27. THOUGH SPACE PROBLEMS IN THIS FULLY RECRUITED EVENT PRECLUDED USE ON ALL DAYS OF EXHIBITION, THE SYSTEM, ITSELF A DRAW IN THE BUSINESS EQUIPMENT LINE, WAS USEFULLY DISPLAYED. USRTC IS DEFINITELY INTERESTED IN UTILIZING THE SYSTEM IN FUTURE SHOWS.

H. COMPARISON OF SYSTEM WITH PRINTED DIRECTORIES: VSMF DOES NOT COVER AS WIDE AND COMPREHENSIVE A RANGE OF PRODUCTS AS PRINTED DIRECTORIES. THUS, FOR CLINET SEEKING SUPPLIER FOR SPECIFIC KNOWN PRODUCT OR SIMPLY BUSINESS ADDRESSES, PRINTED DIRECTORIES ARE USUALLY SUFFICIENT. FOR THE MORE THROUGH BUSINESSMAN WISHING TO RESEARCH COMPARATIVE PRODUCT INFORMATION, SPECIFICATIONS, ETC., OF COURSE PRINTED DIRECTORIES ARE GENERALLY INSUFFICIENT AND VSMF IS FAR SUPERIOR.

I. COMMERCIAL DIRECTORIES USED MOST EXTENSIVELY BY POST:

THOMAS REGISTER - 1975
MACRAES BLUE BOOK- 1974
CONOVER-MAST PURCHASING DIRECTORY-1974
AMERICAN REGISTER OF IMPORTERS & EXPORTERS -1974
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SWEETS CATALOGS- 1975

J. EXPORTS: POST HAS INSUFFICIENT PERIOD OF EXPERIENCE WITH SYSTEM TO DETERMINE OR DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ANY EXPORTS WHICH MAY HAVE RESULTED FROM USE OF VSMF.

K. REACTION OF USERS: CSU HAS SMALL NUMBER OF STEADY AND REPEATING USERS OF VSMF WHO ARE QUIRE SATISFIED, EVEN IMPRESSED, WITH DATA SYSTEM CAN PROVIDE. ONE DIFFICULTY, HOWEVER, IS LENGTH OF TIME WHICH MUST BE DEVOTED TO LOCATE INFORMATION SOUGHT. MANY SINGAPOREAN VISITORS TO CSU DO NOT WISH SPEND MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES AND SHY AWAY FROM SYSTEM IN PREFERENCE TO THE REFERENCE LIBRARIAN PROVIDING THEM INFORMATION QUICKLY FROM PRINTED DIRECTORIES.

L. INFORMATION HANDLING SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE: POST HAS HAD ONE FOLLOWUP VISIT BY IHS REP. SINCE INSTALLATION AND IS SATISFIED WITH SERVICE. OUT OF DATE CARTRIDGES HAVE BEEN REPLACED PROMPTLY.

M. RENTAL OF ADDITIONAL SYSTEMS: POST NEEDS ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH SYSTEM IN ORDER TO RECOMMEND PLACING SYSTEMS AT OTHER POSTS AND TRADE CENTERS.

N. ANNUAL RENTAL FEE: POST STRONGLY DESIRES RETAIN SYSTEM AT LEAST THROUGH FY 1978 TO BUILD USAGE AND CLIENTELE TO MAXIMUM EXTENT. POST BELIEVES ANNUAL FEE OF \$15,625 REASONABLE IN TERMS OF VISITORS ATTRACTION POTENTIAL TO CSU AND EXPORT PROMOTION PROSPECTS. THOUGH IN PRINCIPLE POST WOULD AGREE TO PAYMENT OF THIS FEE THIS IS ACADEMIC QUESTION GIVEN LIMITED BUDGET OF CSU FACILITY UNDER WHICH JURISDICTION THIS ITEM WOULD FALL. FYI CSU EXPENDITURES FOR ALL OTHER COMMERCIAL REFERENCE SOURCES RUN LESS THAN \$5,000 ANNUALLY AT THIS POST.
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